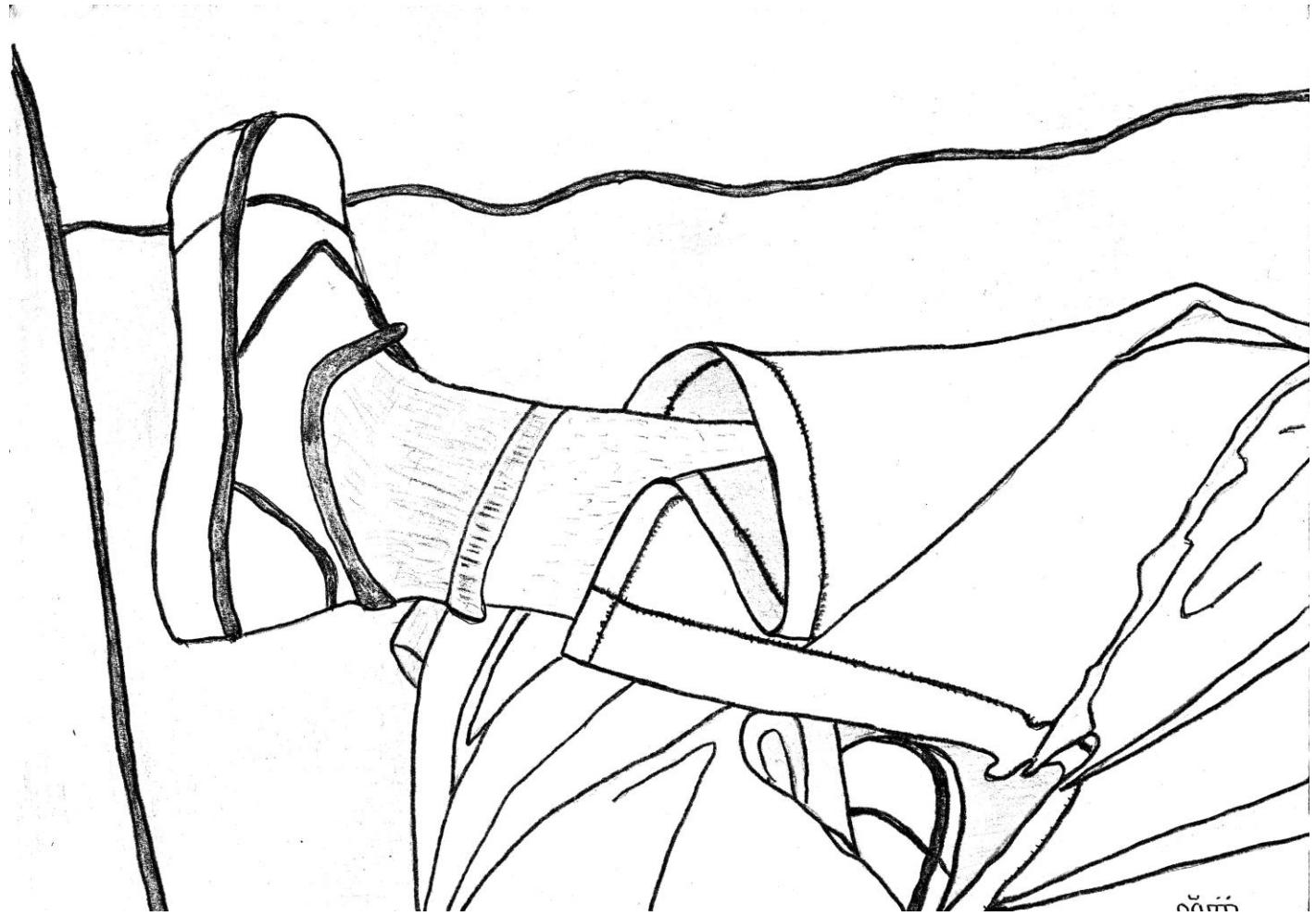


# **POETICS: 1969 - 1984**



**Wayne Scott Ray**

# EBIP

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## Table of Contents

<b>POETICS</b> Introduction	3
Nature Poems	8
Friends, Family & Children	26
Travel Poems:	
Alabama, Newfoundland & Europe	44
Religious Influences	52
Teenage Angst, Love & Death	56
<b>Suburban Eyes</b>	68
<b>Auschwitz</b> (revisted)	92

**POETICS** began on New Years Eve in 1968/69. I was in Grade XII attending a youth conference in Niagara Falls, Ontario as a representative of my highschool, College Avenue Secondary School in Woodstock Ontario where I also attended in 1969/70 in Grade XIII. A girl my age, whom I had met the day before, Norma Jean Armstrong, from Brampton Ontario, asked me to write her a poem. I replied that I had never written a poem before but that I would try. That night I sat down in my room and wrote my first poem:

### **I Came Across A Field One Day**

Star bright and meadow green  
while leaves of scarlet in Fall do sing  
and girls with legs as legs do run  
across the fields in the summer sun.

Moon light and winter sheen  
while rolling hills sleep unseen  
and boys with legs as legs do run  
across the fields in the summer sun.

Suns height and river clean  
while forest trees grow tall and lean  
and with each other the youths do run  
across the fields in the summer sun.

One for one and all for all  
in Summer, Winter, Spring, and Fall  
and all the day and all the night  
the youths run for youth delight.

Summer's gone for you and me  
not for them as we can see  
we are older you and I  
ecstasy and youth will never die.

I thought this was not too bad for an eighteen-year-old and this was the start point in my life for creative writing. Over the following decades I thought about Norma Jean and her initial influence on my writing. I had tried later in life to find her and thank her but to no avail. In 2003 I told this story in an online interview for an Internet poetry magazine and several months later I received an e-mail from Norma Jean, who had just read the article and had no knowledge of the influence she had on my writing life.

The original manuscript was printed in a limited run of 50 books in 1982 and sent out mainly to friends, family and a few libraries. This collection is revised and reorganized into appropriate sections. One section should be "***The Worst Poems Ever Written in One's Youth***" but I think the reader should be able to find them quite easily. They shall be included, if not to just produce a grimace on the face of knowledgeable poets and readers.

**SUBURBAN EYES** was written over the winter of 1982/83 in Toronto during a period of time when our ten year marriage was questioning itself. It contains poetry written by me; to my (ex)wife and other female friends; from my wife to me and other friends & colleagues; by another woman (Sylvia Gerl, to myself). The book was named after Loretta Urban (Nurse B.Sc.N. UofT). *Suburban Eyes* had a sell-out print run of 700 and was the only book of poetry with a "Playboy" style centerfold. Sylvia was recently with the NDP.

This book would not have been written without the inspiration of two poets with whom I had several conversations within the previous year. First, I thank Raymond Souster, without whose guidance and inspiration through constructive suggestions, my writing may have stayed in the filing cabinet and never been published, in particular, *Giants of the North* (Third Eye Press, 1992). Secondly, I owe a debt of gratitude to the late Dorothy Livesay, (Writer in Residence at the U of Toronto at the time) who took a look at my first book of poetry (Poetics, 1982) and said that only 10% (11 poems) were any good. She stated that one poem was the best (Yonge St. and Roxborough) and I should discover why this and the other (10) poems are good and work on that style and perfect it.

**Canadian Book Review Annual** supplied the only review in 1984 (dual with *Auschwitz*):

"It is hard to believe that *Suburban Eyes* and *Auschwitz* were written by the same person. (*Auschwitz* review). *Suburban Eyes*, by the same author and already in its second printing, is a disappointing contrast. It is a book of "love and friendship, life and death, fidelity and marriage." These themes are treated in an insipid and maudlin way that fails to arouse interest. Titles like "Young Lovers," "College Sweetheart," and "Run Into My Arms" abound. Of these 28 poems, only one ("Yonge Street and Roxborough") is even worth mentioning. The book reads too much like the ramblings of a first-year college student to be taken seriously."

N.M. Drutz.

**AUSCHWITZ** was written in the greenhouses on the University of Toronto's President's estate in less than one hour in September of 1983 over a two day period, following a conversation with a poet/friend Abbe Eddleson, in a downtown Toronto restaurant. Some of the poems were presented during a poetry reading held at the Main Street Library in October of 1983 and subsequently published by Chris Faiers of Unfinished Monument Press in November 1983 with a print run of 300 copies (with photographs).

"*Auschwitz* consists of seven poems. The title is a metaphor for the atrocities committed during World War II, not only to the Jewish race but to other peoples as well. The tone is ironic, angry, bitter, and scornful. The most powerful poems are those which describe the horrors of the concentration camps. In "The Ovens" we read "I was there when / they cleaned out the ovens, / gut wrenching sweet stench / with every shower of flames and / I saw what intense heat does / to fragile skin and bones,..." It is not clear who is actually speaking here; a German concentration camp official? Ray is bitter, but he does not believe that those involved in the war should inflict their bitterness and hate onto the younger generation ("Your Fathers Pain"), and feels that the Jews should not forget that they were not the only ones throughout history to be massacred ("Eleven Million Human Beings"). Incidentally, the latter poem is rhymed, demonstrating that Ray can handle rhyme quite effectively. *Auschwitz* is a powerful statement, partly because the theme can never fail to evoke some response." N.M. Drutz CBRA

The poem *Prisoner Of War* was awarded the Editor's Prize by Sheila Martindale, for "*the best poet published in 1989*" by the Canadian Authors Association and was published in their magazine: *Canadian Author*.

The poem *Vietnam War Memorial* appeared in *Crossing Lines: Poets who came to Canada in the Vietnam Era*, Seraphim Editions 2008.

The poems *George* and *Letter Home From A Body Bag* appeared in *Going Down Goose Lane Toward Broken Jaw*, Harmonia Press 2005 and were added to the revised booklet.

*On The Discovery of Joseph Mengele* has been published several times in journals and magazines over the years.

*(In)Sanity* was produced as a song in the album *From The Outside* by Curtis Brunet in 2001

The poems in the Chapbook were actually written on a duality theme. While the general theme of the poetry is WWII, each poem also represents other wars and conflicts that have taken place since WWII and the individuals dealings with post war trauma. Several additional poems have been added to this collection which deal with the themes expressed in *Auschwitz*.

***"Lest we forget the human dust in the tears of God.."***

## Nature Poems:

### Canoe Dream

Blue sky, silent  
waters passing by,  
quiet paddle gliding,  
cathedral trees,  
lily pad frogs,  
majestic deer, sun  
sparkled lakes,  
wilderness loon,  
islands,  
canoe dream.

### The Garden At Casa Loma

The garden is gone.  
So saithe the gardener.  
Tulipus non existimus.  
There is nothing left  
to brighten the land.  
Nothing left to show after  
taking away the hand.  
Crumble pleasant walks.  
Glass falls from  
greenhouse halls and  
as the weeds lie and  
as the winds sigh so  
shall the garden die.  
Tulipus non existimus.  
So saithe the gardener.  
The garden is gone.

## **Rima**

Beauty in the riches  
of an enchanted forest,  
grace of movement in  
valley or mountain high,  
loin cloth about her thigh,  
innocence upon her face,  
beauty of a forgotten race.  
Skin so fair and so white,  
arms outstretched  
in the morning light.  
High in the trees she  
has her home and you may  
have seen her on a long  
forgotten morn,  
receding from you  
into the heart of darkness.

## **M&M's**

You can spend your life  
building castles out of sand  
with peppermint cannons  
and M&M people, but let me  
tell you something,  
sand slides and peppermints  
and M&M's melt in the rain.

## **After Spring Rains**

The splendor of the rainbow  
spreading its colors 'round.  
Shining over hill and dale,  
after rain falls to the ground.

Lift up your eyes in awe,  
ye people of the Earth,  
for when the rainbow shines  
it fills the air with mirth.

Send an offering to our God  
and happy he will be,  
for he sent the rainbow down  
just for you and me.

## **Dead Fall**

The dead tree fell  
and there came a great wind  
from the toppling branches.

The trunk split.  
The Earth reached up  
to take her prize,  
then there came a sound  
like thunder.

## **Across the Deep and Dark Green Sea**

Across the deep and dark green sea  
we made our way, you and me.  
Across the sea in search of land,  
we made our way hand in hand.

To get from here, today,  
to find a place for us to stay.  
We've travelled far and travelled wide,  
the days are long, the waves we ride.

Sea's getting rough, what the heck,  
we've got a safe and sturdy deck.  
Rougher still, I cannot lie.  
Born to the sea, to the sea we die.

## **I Wandered Lonely As A Cloud**

I wandered lonely as a cloud,  
just after my birth, a vapor.  
I was all bound up, not really free,  
gliding through the air.

Soon the winds came and broke  
me into many parts you see,  
for I am with the wind now  
and nothing has a hold on me!

## **The Duck Blind**

In the red sunset they will never fail,  
skilful hunters though they be,  
whether after duck or shooting quail,  
three in a duck blind and a setter.  
Silhouettes on a red lake night  
like stones hidden from sight.  
The water forever ripples in its flight  
flowing past them, they will never fail.  
The wild sedge grass is bent underfoot,  
twilight, always twilight.  
Geese in silent majesty sail,  
the dog barks and wolves wail,  
twilight, always twilight.  
Standing in the water they try in vain,  
listening for just one wild refrain.  
They will forever be looking,  
forever hungry, always the hunting men.  
They will never fail, but will they ever win?

### **Yesterday the Elm Tree Grew**

Yesterday  
the elm tree grew,  
stood tall and strong  
with ever branching splendour.  
Roots grasping around,  
providing fire warmth  
on once crystal nights.

Today  
the elm tree grows,  
still standing tall  
with never branching splendour.  
Yellowed leaves against the sky.  
Roots begin to cease.  
We stand and stare  
and wonder why  
a tree once strong,  
must now die?

Tomorrow,  
yesterday the elm tree grew,  
stood tall and strong...

### **Life's Final Rest**

Across the sea of deepest green

to the farther shore I go,  
to find a place so serene,  
for my body and my soul.

I've set out on life's long quest,  
across the sea of deepest green  
and travelled with little rest  
for no land can be seen.

There's hope that I shall make it,  
although I think it not.  
I see a place where I shall lie  
for on this sea I shall die.

### **Along the Highway**

There is a young girl  
along the highway  
beside a horse trailer  
overturned on blood stained  
bales of hay.

Grey Gelding  
hardly breathing or standing.  
The girl feels his pain  
and from her eyes,  
horse tears like rain.

### **Ice Storm**

There is a spell that's cast  
on a cold wet winter's night  
and you dare not move  
lest you break it.

White sparkling forests  
the frost filled landscapes make,  
soft and silent icy branches  
reaching up for the sky,  
and you dare not move,  
lest you break it.

### **Hedges on Either Side**

How strange the

curves and ups and  
downs of my life,  
hedges on either side  
of an enigmatic road,  
leading away,  
winding away from that  
vaginal door,  
never ending ups and downs,  
up and .....

### **Moonlight**

Night falls. Moonlight  
casts gentle moonbeams  
on silver leaves,  
playing on gentle grasses,  
flowing through silver trees.  
Moonbeams hang from branches  
waving in the breeze.

### **Sunshine**

Man can be moved as the rock is  
by the small things in nature.

The sun shines hot and cool nights come.  
They both crack, one a smile,  
the other down the middle.

### **Nivis**

All around the world,  
trees growing, rivers flowing,  
three seasons of hustle,  
only then does all rustle.  
Winter comes and white silence.

## **First Snowfall**

The snow has started falling,  
it's falling all around,  
like a myriad of feathers  
gliding to the ground.  
The snow's as white as  
snow can be, and as cold  
as cold is too.  
I'm glad I'm inside,  
aren't you?

## **Once**

Once while walking along  
the banks of a river, I  
was asked by the girl with  
whom I was walking; "What  
would you do if  
I fell in?" I would  
Jump in and save you!  
"That's good", she said. That's  
all she ever said, for we walked on in silence.

## **Puffballs**

In the forest where it lay  
like the moon in the trees.  
A virgin in the tainted forest,  
not affected by the breeze.

I plucked it in my hungry hands,  
a morsel for my table thought I.

It started to rain.  
What had I done?  
I've killed nature's moon  
and destroyed her son  
by eating death's sweet meat  
in the afternoon sun.

## **Portage**

Canoe stop glide,  
trudging up over,  
back pack,  
deer trails clear sky,  
path winding to  
meadow lake,  
portage.

### **Junior Ranger Returns for Tea (Algonquin Park, 1972)**

They tore the park down today,  
much to my dismay, no one cared.  
All the old songs, campfire songs,  
gone in the smoke that lifts  
across Whitefish Lake.  
All those days are now past,  
the hills have fallen to ruin,  
and tourists fill the serenity like  
a dull roaring lion.  
The lake still has it's name.  
The lake still looks the same,  
bring on the rivers silent roar  
I long for it, still no more.  
They tore the park down today,  
no more laughter, no more play,  
everyone has left the shore  
and the wind echoes no more.  
I forgive you now before winter.  
They took the park and moved it ahead,  
all my trees planted, loves lost,  
changed over the years,  
memories in frozen tears,  
so come to me my lady white,  
kiss me in the morning light,  
come and sing and come and play  
with you beside me shall I lay,  
bring my pipe and bring me home,  
from this place where I'm alone  
I'll go to be alone again  
to dream my dreams of invisible men.  
Ceaseless waves lap no more,  
lonely loons do I implore,  
black dogs on the loose,  
let's hear it for the Canada Goose,

boats upon a sandy beach,  
islands almost out of reach.  
They tore the park down today,  
they came and took it away,  
I cried the day it died  
so be a tourist,  
feed the bears,  
nobody cares.

### **Whitefish Lake: Algonquin Park**

Unchanging rhythm of the falling shore.  
Endless beauty of the mountains silent roar.  
The island stands beneath the sun  
and on this lake it's the only one.

A sentinel to the voyageurs it stands,  
reaching out with timeless hands  
as clouds pass over the mountain bold,  
across the lake of tales untold.

The tales we knew are with us now  
in the serenity of the night  
and upon this lake in the wilderness,  
we shall shed a little light.

## Toronto Poems:

### 999 Queen Street West

Happy, trying to laugh  
friends play new game  
clapping with one hand  
his eye open wide.

Do not speak they say  
he cracks a smile  
with one lip  
oh fun, fun.

Eye looking at star  
he awaits his friends  
lying there in wood  
he did not know.

Eye lid looking at moons  
close eye they told him  
he heard shovel fall  
he never saw  
moons again.

### The Evening Bus to Toronto

The evening bus to Toronto,  
engulfed in total darkness,  
save one solitary light,  
shadows casting shadows  
on this Morpheus of night's.  
The brightness it reflected  
was all that we could see,  
while one old man sat  
beneath it,  
oblivious to us three.  
The bus was not as full  
on this long cold winter's night,  
most others were asleep,  
from the steady hum  
of wheels upon the street.  
We sat in the back  
my daughters and I,  
one child asleep,  
legs on my lap,

the other gave me a gentle tap.  
The man clothed in white,  
closed his eyes to the night,  
leaned back, head in hand,  
my daughter tapped me gently,  
wide eyed at the old albino man  
and as the bus rolled across  
good old Toronto sod,  
this child looked up and asked,  
Daddy, is that God?

### **Someone Else's Life**

Someone else's life passed before my eyes,  
across the street from the bus stop  
where I stood.  
Someone else's life was on a bicycle  
rear ended by a truck, screeching tires,  
then a body slamming into a  
telephone pole.  
Someone else's life struggled to breath  
as it was carried away within minutes by  
a nearby ambulance to a nearby hospital.  
The street cleared of  
rubber-neckers and riffraff  
and do-gooders as the bus picked me up.  
I put in my seventy-five cents  
after someone else's life  
passed before my eyes.

### **The Wind Blows Strong in the Heads of the Mindless (Windfields, 1976)**

The anger of senility is pent up  
and then released in sudden outbursts  
upon the fragile air that separates  
the old from juvinility.  
The helping hand is cut off  
and rolls to the floor as the  
foot is drawn from the mouth  
and the greasy comb fits  
in his back pocket with the whiskey flask.  
Those persons who are new and untrained  
in your field of endeavour,

think that you will help them  
because of your experiences.  
You put them down in silence.  
Never ask them questions, for in  
their intellectual stupidity  
they show their weakness.  
Be wary of those that give you  
the jobs they should do  
and then give you Hell  
for asking others  
to do the things you didn't know  
they could do in the first place.  
Old man, my boss, I beg of you,  
let down your defences,  
let down your fears  
and try to accept what is new.  
Do not hold onto your daughters  
and let your son go,  
bring only the kettle to a boil  
and when you are calm with ths world  
and feel at rest with fellow workers  
and want to finally be friends  
instead of an overlord,  
that's when you can take this job  
and shove it!

### **Windfields #1**

My life is not wasting away  
inside on such a glorious day.  
Time between my fingers slips,  
frozen at winter's doorsteps.  
Dog tracks outside.  
Birds frozen on the wing  
but I sit content  
with my life not wasting away.

## **Windfields #2**

It could be lonely  
when no one comes to see  
all the efforts  
of your pedigree.  
Alone on an estate,  
to do as you please  
with never a thank you  
longer than a breeze.  
Alone among the riches,  
listening to the bitches,  
never to awaken in reality.

## **Windfields #3**

The cracks between the slats  
of a greenhouse floor.  
Dry rot in the corners  
of an old wooden shed  
lead me to gaze upon broken  
clay crock in boxes by the door.  
Iron heating pipes,  
dead vines in green leaves,  
orchids amongst carnations  
attracting me to the smell  
of old rotting soil and  
insecticide, all of which  
is grateful to hide behind  
the memories of gardeners of old.

## **Windfields #4**

All day long for no reason at all  
you sit there, for others you toil.  
All day long with fingernails  
filled with soil.  
A faint ray of light hits the glass,  
you smile, awhile, all day long.  
For absolutely no reason at all.

## **Friends, Family & Children:**

### **Adieu**

Est-ce que c'est fini?  
No my child, it has just begun.  
Quand alors?  
Soon my child, soon.  
Une priere maman?  
Yes, say one for all of us.  
C'etait comme ca tout les temps?  
It is getting worse. Now go  
to sleep my little one and  
may your soul fly to the sun.  
Au revoir, maman.  
Adieu ma petit, adieu.

### **Susan, April 1972**

in hospitals now  
the nurses grow  
between the femurs row on row

digitalis spreads  
between the sheets  
where nurses tread

they make the beds  
and give the meds  
and change the bed pans  
when mother nature calls

in hospitals today  
the nurses know  
not to give bed baths  
to anyone with mono.

## **Friendship**

Friendship is everlasting  
there's nothing you can do  
for once you make a friend of me  
I'll make a friend of you.

To love, to hope, to pray  
a friend is always there  
to help you in your troubles  
to help with your care.

And if you are in sorrow  
sending out a plea,  
always remember one thing,  
you have a friend in me.

## **Biafran Child**

### **War Begun:**

O little Biafran child,  
sitting down meek and mild,  
can't stand up, malnutrition,  
in the papers, exhibition.  
Looking 'round, don't you see  
that you're dying, 1,2,3.  
Run to mama little one,  
genocide has just begun.

### **War Ended:**

The war's now over little child,  
who sat there once, meek and mild.  
We've tried to conquer malnutrition  
to keep your race from extinction.  
We've come from far across the sea  
to save your dying, 1,2,3.  
Now our battle's just begun  
and with hope it will be done.

### **Biki Ray: After Her Marriage**

Always together we've been,  
friendship unhindered,  
daily done.

Children growing up,  
brother and sister, we.

Past the sand box, past  
the schools, passing others by.

It has taken time  
to realize  
that comes this day, it would,  
I'd find a woman standing there  
where once a child had stood.

### **Changing Jaclyn**

As I sit here on the silent couch,  
my left foot propped upon  
a squared table,  
a little curly girl  
came crawling,  
bumping her head on my  
under shorted legs.

Tiny hands reached up  
as she raised on one knee,  
balancing, teetering, smiling,  
grasping the hairs on my thigh.  
Pain I can bear.

I peered from behind  
my writing pad at  
this fuzzy haired kid  
and placed her in my lap,  
realizing too late  
why she was there.

### **Sonnet to A Bonnet**

There inside my sweets demise  
like a floundering, fledgling sea,  
a tempest grows of Lilliput size  
and swells of lifes retort,  
prize fighter in a bubble nest,  
sleeping oft with nary a snort.

Why go on when you know the rest,  
through grunts and groans  
and grains of sand,  
introducing you  
to my newborn  
Leanne.

### **The Frustration of Friendship**

I could see in her eyes  
the frustration of friendship.  
She played by herself, while  
her best friend rolled down the hill  
with her sister.  
It didn't seem to bother her,  
although I could see that look  
in her eye, asking why?

I had seen her following  
her friend earlier,  
trying to play but lingering  
behind like a little puppy.  
They both sat beside me,  
saying they were having fun  
and then she would run off  
after her schoolyard friend  
once again, yelling,  
play with me, play with me  
and be my friend,  
will you be my friend?

**Cris (05/10/52-12/25/78):  
an elegy before its time, 12/25/77**

For me, winter comes most easily.  
For me, winter comes true.  
White silence upon the land,  
shall we walk hand in hand,  
do not put it off too long.  
Come to me before winter.  
With utmost haste,  
time must not we waste, winter comes.  
I shall not wait for spring.  
Will you?  
It's not long as though may seem.  
I await your reply as to why.  
I forgive you all your misgivings,  
your troubles and fears,  
reactions in frozen tears,  
memories of yesteryears.  
You'll tell me in the spring  
I know, but I forgive you now, before winter.

**Brother Cris**

Where can I go, to whom can I turn  
in these my times of discomfort.  
There is a misunderstanding  
presently in my soul, where can  
I run to, where can I turn.  
Gone is love, love is gone.  
Hope is lost, lost is hope.  
When all is reached, pushing.  
When all is asked, nothing.

I'll find my own tranquillity  
in pastel shades of mediocrity.  
Blue is wandering off in all directions,  
yellow, can I go back,  
red, where did I go wrong,  
green, when all is still  
in my mind, then black.

## **Dream Weaver**

We give our children dreams  
as rare as our parents  
gave us dreams.

Children everywhere will always  
believe in dreams and wishes hide  
behind their eyes while their little hearts  
sit and listen to timeless tales  
and sing the songs  
that have been passed down  
through the ages.

## **Passion and Anger**

Passion.  
Passion and anger,  
like two small children wanting the same doll.  
Aggression wanders through my brain  
to where I'm going, from where I've been.  
Reached only once to find it's the same.

Fight it!  
Slight it!  
Forget it.  
Passion and anger.

## **Pregnant Poem**

Slowly  
growing into  
from a cell  
quick divide into parts  
forming a new human being  
lying at rest in mother's womb  
the months pass by it's coming near  
growing day by day with kind love  
anticipation fills the baby's eyes  
born now into a world  
that is to die  
o god help  
me to  
live  
to be  
with thee.

## **The Promise**

Please daddy, please.  
It was a Friday night and  
how could I resist those baby blues.  
To the bathroom first  
and nothing to drink, said I.  
Thanks daddy, came the reply.

I heard a muffled scream  
in the middle of the night.  
I ran in with face of fright.  
She lay beside her mother  
on a bed of lace,  
the smell of urine  
all over the place.

**Question Posed by A Nine  
Year Old After Her Six  
Mile Trip to See A Friend  
In A Snow Storm, One Day  
After Her and Her School  
Were Infested by Head Lice  
And She Lost Her Lunch Box,  
Two Days After Hitting A Tree  
While Sledding and Three Days  
After the Cat Killed the Rabbit:**

Daddy, why is life so hard?

## **One of Those Days**

This is one of those days  
when I feel useless, all I do  
just doesn't seem to have that  
certain umph I put behind things.  
I've been sleeping badly,  
the fish bowl leaked into the  
filing cabinet, the neighbour's  
kids threw my garbage all over  
the street, the frost killed off  
all my seedlings at the greenhouse,  
my wife wants a boyfriend and the  
new dog killed the cat.  
Here we go to the funny farm.  
Here we go to the...

## **Susan**

what a pleasure it is  
upon your thighs  
raised high around me  
deep sweet penetration  
moist sweet sensitive  
gentle sighs  
heaving thighs

Susan Lynn Walmsley Ray R.N., Ph.D. passed away suddenly in her 64<sup>th</sup> year, August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

## **My Suzy's got a baby**

My Suzy's got a baby  
down in her tummy.  
Everyone is waiting  
to see the new mommy.  
Sue's sort of short  
and sort of funny,  
sort of cute, and  
sort of a honey.  
This poem is not too big  
but Suzy sure is!

## **College Sweetheart**

So now you've gone  
and left me here, to  
think of the good times  
and remember the cheer,  
the year was short  
that we knew,  
weeks passed and friendship grew,  
now summers gone  
and fall is nigh,  
soon to be together my  
college sweetheart and I,  
to place a kiss upon  
her lips is all in my design,  
to squeeze the grapes upon  
her bush and taste  
of her sweet wine.

## **Baigent**

A farmers work is never done  
from early morn to setting sun.

You don't mind the work at all  
O little girl from Ingersoll.

The work is rough and tiresome too  
your brother does it all for you.

He doesn't mind despite the weather  
it gives us time to be together.

Work is work the whole day through  
I work hard, why can't you.

Work for you as I can see,  
could be tricky, Vicky.

## **The Ingersoll Inn Trilogy (1973)**

### **Margaret:**

I thought I knew you,  
you looked so sadly familiar,  
come in, come in to the Ingersoll Inn,  
pull up a chair, have one on me,  
fill our glasses with laughter,  
for we have lost our baseball game,  
happiness has lost its flame.  
Come sit with us and sup with us,  
all night and morning too,  
dance with us and prance with us,  
for I've lost my love so true.  
So be my friend and comfort me,  
tell me that I'm pretty,  
tell me that I'm thin,  
talk me laughter  
in this Ingersoll Inn.  
Tell me the morning bell won't ring.  
My friends and I have lots to do,  
drinking away the pain,  
drinking,  
away the pain.

**Marilyn:**

In the pastures of our mind,  
memories of who's left behind,  
trying one and trying all,  
forever writhing in a ball,  
friends of friends  
forsake them not,  
dancing while the night is hot.  
One's best friend of noble class  
does not cut her neighbour's grass,  
though it grows both tall and lean,  
and hides great sites unseen.  
I beg your pardon sir,  
but will you drink with me?  
I've filled your glass you see.  
The night is young,  
we're full of life,  
come tear away the shout of strife.  
My friends and I have decided that,  
as all has come to pass,  
to pay a visit to your home,  
and teach you how to cut grass.

**Ruth Ann:**

O Rudy, Rudy,  
you look so purdy.  
(I had to make this rhyme)  
You look so keen  
in your hot rod machine.  
Pour me another beer,  
dance me another dance,  
come to me my man in white,  
kiss me in the early light,  
come and sing and  
come and play,  
with you beside me will I lay,  
bring my beer and  
bring me home,  
far from this place  
where I am alone.  
I'll go to be alone again,  
to dream my dreams  
of invisible men.

**Skin of Snow**  
*for Anne Cimon*

I read your book  
and like ice cream  
it melted in my mouth.  
I devoured your poems,  
chocolate and vanilla  
passages,  
dripping down my chin.  
Flavored words, some  
soft and gentle,  
others, cut with color.

I read your book  
and like a flower  
it blossomed in my hand  
but deep down inside  
I felt there was  
a killing frost.

**Terry Fox**

There once was a long  
distance runner, across  
Canada he wanted to run.  
Through the Muskokas and  
the prairies for fun.  
Running for the pleasure to run,  
West across the Rockies,  
right into the Pacific ocean.  
Laid to rest,  
under the setting sun.

## Travel Poems: Alabama, Newfoundland & Europe

### **Clay County Alabama**

Where the sun's high  
there's no time to cry,  
if you could only see  
where I want to be.

Now I've spent my life,  
happiness and strife,  
if you could only be  
where I want to see.

I have fleeting glances  
of high school dances,  
I have football games,  
I have southern flames.

Do you really see  
in your mediocrity,  
if you could only see  
where I want to be.

### **Interstate**

When the rain falls  
on tree clad hills,  
clump, clump  
the oil wells pump.  
Winding roads run through  
mud slide road cuts,  
pitter the rain, patter  
on the car's window shield.

Rain, rain go away,  
why do you follow me today,  
in hazy glaze,  
wet green grass upon  
the land, upon the land.

## **Lineville, Alabama**

I went home for a few years, today.  
I passed the miles of aisle  
that beneath the wheels did crawl  
and at this time of longing for something to come home to,  
I see Mason-Dixon concrete beneath my feet.  
The pain of a thousand, thousand upon  
a segregated sidewalk. I went  
home for a few years, today.

Then there were the people,  
custodians of unwritten history.  
Remember my father's father now.  
O fair Rockies forgive me.  
O Eastern seaboard serene.  
Great Lakes you fail to see the pain  
of this lovely refrain  
and I am home,  
I am home.

## **Train in Wales**

Why am I  
on the outside  
looking in  
when I am as  
lonely as they are  
looking out?

## **Susan Lynn**

If there ever were a girl so fair  
'twas the one I left behind.

Of her stays fond memories  
when in bed I lie and dream.

Two long months I'll be away,  
travelling alone and free.

When I return, with her  
will I only be.

## **Windmills of My Mind**

I thought about you last night  
as I danced along in the windmills  
of my mind.

Strange dances and hidden thoughts  
and the halls of my mind  
were filled with the Slovak faces  
of the unfamiliar.

## **Dover**

I'm off to the land  
of the twisted pine  
where salt sea breezes  
wash against my face  
and the stones under foot  
bring memories of beaches  
where white cliffs  
reach out to  
meet the sea.

Your heart fell from your eyes  
and streamed down your cheeks  
falling into an empty lap.  
Wet daydreams are just  
day dreams, dreams.

## **And the Rains Came**

And the rains came  
setting a coolness  
upon the land,  
and it was not seen.

And the sun shone,  
drying away the rains,  
warming the land,  
and it was not felt.

And the winds came,  
blowing across the fields,  
echoing through the forests,  
and it was not heard.

And the rains came and  
the sun shone and  
the winds blew...

## **Amsterdam**

Amsterdam stands  
in sun warmed air  
while cold water flows  
over the sand on your feet  
when walking in parks  
as trees cover the sighs  
of the slums and you go  
along content, about to be  
picked up by a prostitute

## **Sometimes You Can Go Home**

Sometimes you can go home  
arms around the past.  
Unchanged imprints on mirrors  
stare through you, to you, from you.

Sometimes you can go  
along the asphalt life way where  
place memories are real again  
to see, touch, smell, to remind.

Sometimes you can  
forget the binds that tie  
the wounds that heal the  
loss of love, of youth, of you.

Sometimes you haven't left home.  
That's when you  
can't go home again.

### **Durham Castle**

The trees are beautiful  
as we pass along  
they stand up tall  
singing natures song

### **A Train in Wales**

Why do they look  
at the way I sit  
and where I am?

Don't they know  
first class seats  
aren't necessarily  
for first class persons?

### **St. John's in Morn**

The early morning sun shone,  
clouds hung above the ocean as  
ominous waves crashed upon the rocks.  
The clouds were of the purist white,  
the sea the deepest green.  
The sun penetrated morning air  
off the coast of Cape Spear.  
This is but a picture frame, I  
have not told the rest for the  
most inspiring scene at hand  
is the early morning fog  
covering this new found land.

## **Long Gull Pond 1973**

Those days are gone, I guess when you're ten  
and everything looks so big  
this lake, these hills, rocks on the Earth,  
you, returning to your place of birth.  
The time you, in my cold water swam,  
turning blue, acting out, always the ham,  
You were tough but always out of reach,  
lighting fires upon my beach.  
There were times of sweet caress,  
rowing from shore with some duress,  
your father would rock the boat and say,  
no one's drowned on this lake 'till today'  
How long has it been by the clock  
since you last sat on Beaver Rock?  
How far away those days seem to be,  
until I saw you standing here,  
now twenty-three.  
Your laughing voice calmed my waves  
on sunny, sunny summer days.  
You'll never know how I loved your fun,  
as cabins grew mossy  
and rocks cracked in the sun.  
Those days are gone, I guess,  
when you're ten and everything looks so big.  
Now all you do is stand and stare,  
walking here and walking there,  
waters caress you on my beach,  
you are so close, so out of reach,  
you've just returned, please stay awhile,  
come on in and make me smile!

## **Religious Influences:**

### **Christ and Judas**

Then he had forsaken Him,  
ridiculed and abused Him.  
It was really nothing to him  
and yet he never stopped.  
He stood and took it and  
shed not a tear.  
One day he who had ridiculed  
and abused Him, lay dying.  
He who had been abused came  
and stood beside him and shed a tear.  
Laughing, he scorned Him, then  
he died, but was not buried by Him.  
Upon the shore was he lain, and  
He beside him and He too died,  
having first shed a tear.

### **The Last Tears**

I take this time to ask God  
or Christ or my soul for forgiveness  
or compassion for all my wrong doings,  
bad, no evil thoughts and deeds.  
I realize I've been fooling no one  
in hiding the things about myself,  
my family, my parents, my friends, colleagues.  
Why do I go on deceiving?  
Who do I ask for? I ask for no one.  
I talk gibberish to pass the time,  
write poetry and avoid the rhyme.  
The lights grow dim and the sun sets  
on my desire not to have desires.  
The door closes, the chain falls  
against the wall, the razor cuts the skin  
just below the water line  
and the warmth of death enters my soul.  
My warm blood, spurt by pounding spurt,  
leaves my lice infested soul.  
My black heart and shapeless eyes feel weak.  
With the other arm, I place the razor  
on the edge of the tub,  
smile a faint prisoners smile,  
close my eye and sink down,  
down into a place I've both feared and loved.

I see myself from afar,  
floating down this river  
and even in death I find it hard to die,  
just as in life, I found it hard to live,  
see while looking, cry while weeping.  
I would have traded all my dreams  
for one illusion that would have come true.  
Two doors await me.  
One to Heaven and the other to Hell.  
Fire on the crest, ice on the Mantle.  
My soul on a long thin wire.  
My wound bleeds again,  
red stains the grass at the doorstep.  
I reach the threshold,  
don't hesitate to pick the door of my choice.  
I realize my own expectations,  
know my own limits.  
The door opens, knowing I was right.

## R.I.P.

Now is the time, the time has come,  
to each his own, it must be done.  
Time is past and future too.  
Has it come for me and you.

If it's not it's bound to be,  
soon enough just wait and see.  
While we wait, while we ponder,  
time has come for some out yonder.  
They've begged and begged all the same,  
for a little more time that never came.

This old world is very small,  
a billion stars o'er it enthral.  
Life is eternal in our universe,  
dimensions of space we can never traverse.

On and on this life may be  
but here on Earth, not for you or me.  
For life is short so it is said,  
we try to keep living until we are dead.

Most of us don't keep on living this way,  
judgement will come on one fine day.  
And when it does we'll be prepared,  
the wealth of God to be equally shared.

Now we look back, time does stand still,  
we look to the future, we're losing our will.  
Now is the time, this really is it.  
We all lie down: In Pace Requiescit.

## **Body and Spirit**

Of time and space and universe,  
can we, o'er it traverse?  
Through time and space our spirits go,  
our bodies not for they can't flow.

The spirit is God and God is space,  
He is one and all of the human race.  
Across space and infinity,  
go the three of the Trinity.

Our bodies soon will find some rest,  
these three spirits expect the best  
for they are all and all will be,  
forever in our galaxy.

Forever ever onward be,  
the body stays the spirit flees,  
all and all through eternity.

## **Teenage Angst, Love & Death:**

### **You're Never Really Alone**

Someone once said:

*"you're never really alone"*

but you are sometimes,  
long times, seemingly forever times.

When your heart beats  
only for yourself, you're alone.

When your heart beats for someone  
and they won't accept it, you're alone.

When their heart beats for someone  
and they won't share it, that's alone.

When a child's heart beats  
it beats alone, except in love  
it beats for two and the two  
hearts beat as one heart  
and when one heart beats  
it really beats alone.

### **Disguised**

she tied back her hair  
and beside him she went  
as his comrade she disguised  
for she loved only him.

she marched with the best  
she fought and ran with him  
she struggled only for him  
her lasting love  
she could not hide

but alas it was to be  
for now his love for her cried  
when in the last battle  
with bullets she was wed and died.

## **What is Life But That for me**

What is life but that for me,  
a man alone in my shell, among  
the many shells in life's sea,  
and do not know thy song?

What is living, a heart beating,  
eye seeing, ear hearing or walking  
across this mysterious world, not  
to know what one's course in life  
will be without thee?

What was life but that for  
someone else, could have been me,  
another time, another place,  
another day, another race?  
Shell upon shell.

What is life? Life is will.  
A way, a past, a future. Cogito ergo sum.  
Alas, it is beyond one's control,  
one's knowledge, one's goal.

What is life but that for me,  
a man alone in my shell ...

## **Free Fall**

There comes a time in one's own life  
when all we feel is wear and strife.  
To come to terms eye to eye with  
stressful things before we die  
is one of the things we seldom discuss,  
keeping it inside our mental truss.

Goodbye to one.  
Goodbye to all.  
Standing on the cliff of life  
ready to take my fall.

## **Grief and Joy**

Grief is universal as  
many of us know, for who  
can find real happiness in  
the death of friend or foe?

Joy is universal as  
many of us know, for who  
can find real sorrow in  
gifts which some bestow?

These two things go together,  
now listen girl and boy, for if  
there were no grief, to hollow  
out our hearts, where would  
there be room for joy?

## **On Growing Up and Growing Old**

There are times that exist  
when you feel you have grown old  
and not really grown up.  
It's when the world  
goes on about its business  
and all of a sudden you realize  
you've known your best friend  
for twenty-five years and  
your pen-pals fifteen.  
What have you really  
done with your life  
other than some children and a wife.

## **In My Room**

Here I sit  
in my room  
among the darkness  
and the gloom  
writing poetry  
that doesn't  
rhyme.

## **Isle of View**

If I were to say,  
I love you, don't laugh,  
t's not in jest.

Love comes in many ways,  
manners and fashions too,  
if not from the heart,  
maybe the soul,

I  
Love  
You

## **The Poets Lament**

I talked the garbled message  
of my brain  
to people who wouldn't listen  
in sweet refrain.

I sang the song of songs  
to the untuned ear,  
but all my singing  
brought not a tear.

They listened to my silence  
for that they bent an ear,  
for that they raised their head,  
they spoke,  
but I heard not what they said.

## **Time Passes By**

We go through life hanging onto friendships,  
time passes by and only once together do friendships lie,  
that brief fleeting moment of stillness  
when two faces meet and never again seen  
yet always remembered and yet the second  
meeting of the days comes with parting of the ways.  
Time and place and happiness coexist for a brief span  
of time when we, for the first time meet and say  
we will come together again..  
and the raven quoth..never more.

## **Ode to An Egg**

Life is not so short  
as it may seem to be,  
there always is a circle  
of perfect symmetry.

Life is unto an egg,  
no seam can be found.  
It will go on forever,  
the surface is perfectly round.

On the inside of this cycle  
a new life can be seen,  
for the egg is only broken  
by a fresh new living thing.

Life is not so short  
as it may seem to be.  
After you and I are gone,  
there'll be more you and me.

## **Peace**

Peace the troubled heart shall bear  
and upon its soul no worry, no care.  
Peace to ease a heart in sin.  
Peace to help the soul within.  
Peace is prayer to the troubled heart.  
Give peace a chance,  
if only we say it, at least it's a start.

## **The Time Has Come to Pay the Piper (1980)**

The time has come to pay the piper  
said the lady to the loon,  
for such a melancholy melody,  
green backs for the tune,

The time has come to pay the piper  
said the trees to the land,  
none too soon came the reply,  
for the best of songs at hand.

I know of no other place to be  
to walk along beside the sea,  
lazy, hazy starlight upon grass,  
and hear of songs that last.

The time has come to pay the piper  
said the lady to the loon,  
for such a melancholy melody,  
a ten spot for the tune.

Up tree one bark, down to earth  
green upside leaves over brown,  
robin wings and spider mirth,  
no other way to come down.

The time has come to pay the piper  
said the lady with outstretched hand,  
for such a sad, sad melody,  
the time has come to pay the band.

The moon's upon the mountain tops,  
the lady has been delayed,  
she gave him all her love,  
and the piper has been payed.

### **I'll Try Not to Make this Rhyme**

At this time in my life  
all I feel is trouble and strife,  
(I'll try not to make this rhyme)  
when all I have left of past friends  
is the recording of a number  
no longer in service.

When there are so many things  
to do and see, why does this  
depression come over me?  
(there goes that rhyme again)

Silly sullen sure fire sadness.  
I want to puncture the gross breasts  
of man's inhumanity to man,  
to tear out his heart.

I'm screaming right now as you  
read this on the silent paper.

Even as I sit here alone,  
the crescendos of my life are  
nothing but periods at  
the end of this sentence

The radio is blaring and the only  
thing left in the candlestick  
is a hunk of wax, melting,  
drip dried upon the cover of my  
Gordon Lightfoot album  
with the wings of a spider  
imbedded in the center.

I hope I have made you feel  
like I do? I hope so.  
It makes me less insane.  
I could get up and do the dishes  
in the sink but they don't stink.  
(damn rhyme again)  
I think I'll just go to that  
little room down the hall and  
flushit a few hundred times  
for something new in my life.

### **Do You See Me Now?**

What, see me now I,  
I who now are am?  
Be me I ever more see,  
see you me, I know.  
See me, you me, I see.  
Do you see me now?

### **To Kasey**

I once met a girl.  
A pretty little girl, though  
her name I did not know.  
She told me of herself,  
in all detail you know.  
She said she was in sorrow,  
some friends of hers had died,  
I told her I was sorry, she  
looked like she would cry.  
But then I told her, 'twas a fool  
to think like this",  
said I; you say  
you've had your fun,  
while they were still alive,  
now they are dead,  
and you do dread,  
to come out of your hive.

They are only dead , within  
your head  
and no within your heart.  
So sit a while and  
think a while, and  
ponder over this.

Now time has passed, since that day  
going to T.O.

She took the pain of sorrow  
and placed it in a cross,  
a symbol of remembrance,  
today and for tomorrow.

### **The Poet**

Here is a poem, from  
me to you, to heal the emptiness  
of a troubled heart, over which  
the simple words of the  
poet call, for I am  
the poet and to you  
now I sing,  
of birds, of trees,  
of sand and sky and Earth,  
and as you sit and listen  
to the words I depart,  
there's hope, life and joy,  
will enter your broken heart.

### **Times Change**

Times change, and we,  
returning to our tomorrows,  
find only ourselves  
walking within our own minds  
and we begin to see,  
things and forgotten objects  
and the footsteps we so often treading.  
Flashing memories,  
once upon a people laughing time  
and we speak out and cry,  
I'm here, I'm back.  
Echoes in the windmills of our minds.

## **Valentines Day**

Here is a day, set aside once a year,  
for friends who've gone away  
and ones who are quite near.

Here is a day, the same each time,

I want to be your friend

if you'll want to be mine.

It brings together all of us

every boy and girl,

for words like these are said,

all around the world.

Friend's a word all its own,

the true meaning is seldom known,

for no two persons are alike,

no two thoughts ever the same.

A friend's a friend, regardless of skin  
and no matter what the name.

Friendship is something to only touch

with your mind and your soul,

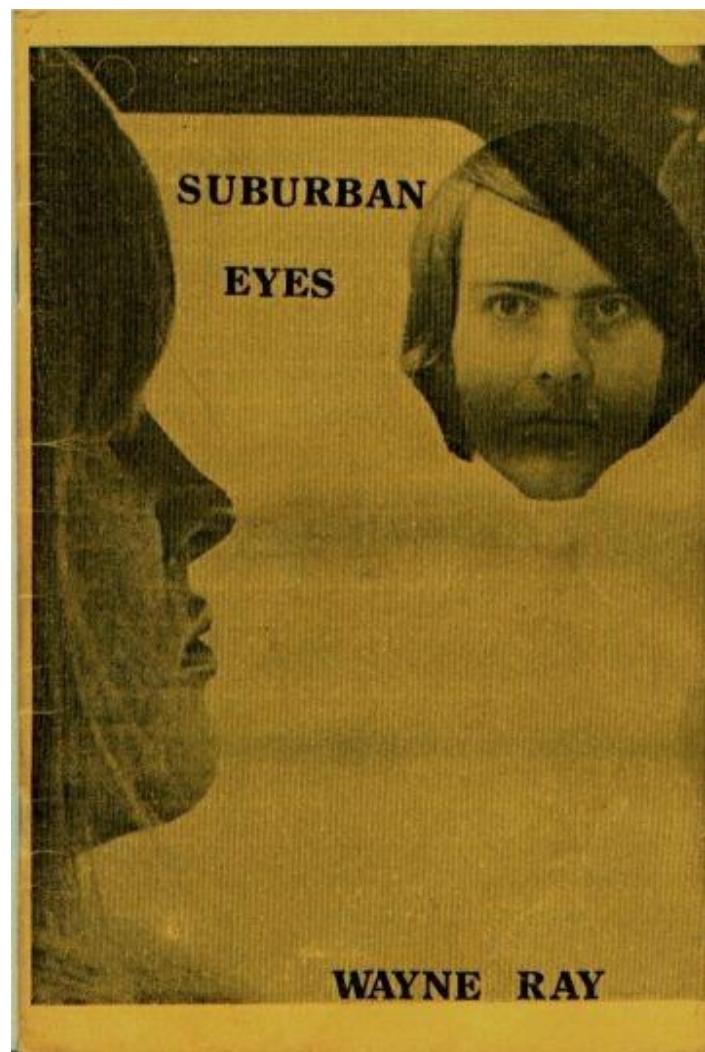
it's something that is shared,

never bought or sold.

So on this special day,

let us all be friends,

each in his own special way.



## **Suburban Eyes**

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**Young Lovers**

Young lovers as friends,  
cast pebbles upon the waters,  
watched by the birds of the air.  
They step into the night  
opening the doors of love.

Young lovers who start as friends,  
hope as they grow old,  
casting pebbles  
will be as easy as  
when they were just friends.

### **College Sweetheart**

So now you've gone  
and left me here, to  
think of the good times  
and remember the cheer,  
year was short  
we knew, weeks passed  
and friendship grew,  
now summers gone  
and fall is nigh,  
soon to be together my  
sweetheart and I,  
to place a kiss upon  
her lips is all in my design,  
squeeze the grapes upon  
her bush and taste  
of her sweet wine.

### **Run Into My Arms**

I catch you off guard  
when my affections  
are too open, and you  
take long walks  
in the open fields  
within your heart.

Don't hold back!  
You want to touch me  
and I your soul,  
then you retract  
your emotions.  
Don't hold back,  
when you see me coming,  
run into my arms!

### **Leaving**

Sometimes I wish  
you weren't going away,  
we've only just met, you and I.  
It seems the wayward  
underside bursts the moment  
you are gone.  
We haven't had time  
to understand each other,  
but it's always the same with me,  
fleeting friends and fantasies.  
I deserve to remain,  
while you release your  
flies from amber.

### **Yonge Street and Roxborough**

She stood on the curb  
as I drove my Fairmont  
up to the stop line. She  
held up her head and began  
walking across the street,  
leaving beads of tears  
falling on the pavement.  
She walked proud and expressionless  
save those sorrowed eyes,  
in front of my Fairmont.

A victim of some unknown tragedy  
to me, as she carried  
her sorrow well hidden,  
to Yonge Street's western side.

I wanted to reach out and help,  
but the light turned green  
in front of my Fairmont,  
and I was on my way home.

### **Common Tears**

Can you voice the dust of all those years,  
through a veil of common tears?  
Does it all have to come to an end with doubt,  
when you had given your all, they cast you out?  
You were better than they, I detect,  
you had all the energy and enthusiasm, they  
had all the energy and no respect.

### **Shift Work**

After I dropped you  
off at work last night,  
I went for a beer.  
I can't remember if  
it was a Golden or a 50  
or whatever.  
When I drink alone  
it takes a long time  
to finish my 50  
or whatever.  
Why is it  
the only time  
we get to go out together  
is when you're working  
shift work,  
and then you're gone  
and I'm left alone,  
to drink my 50,  
or whatever?

## **2d-north, St. Michaels Hospital**

I am in the midst of human wreckage,  
people who have fallen  
by the wayside of life,  
hopeless cases hanging about  
these hospital corridors,  
frozen in their despair,  
unable to cope with  
their reality of life,  
and you poets are oblivious to the pain,  
going about your writings and  
never paying attention  
to what's really happening.

Paper isn't alive and breathing,  
it can't speak out to you, it  
only absorbs the words you  
write upon it,  
oblivious to my pain,  
for I am in the midst of  
human wreckage.

## **You Are Younger**

You are younger than I.  
I crave for you in my night dreams.  
It is only then that I can touch you,  
but you will never know my desires,  
for you crave another, less pure  
but infinitely more desirable.  
She lives on a high frenzied wire.  
I am more subdued and quiet,  
living reality in the recesses  
of my imagination.

When she arrives with you,  
I draw back into my protective shell.

## **Someone**

Someone

had written her a love song  
which she read  
under the hot noon day sun.

Someone

must have known her well enough  
to want to share  
his life with hers.

She

absorbed the heat on her nakedness  
while she stood  
in her back yard tanning,  
reading the rhyme of this love song.

She

wondered who could be so sweet  
in the lines that were spoken.

She

would have liked to answer this person  
who wanted to share loves token.

When

she finished reading  
she could not return the same,  
for beads of sweat fell from her breast  
washing away the name.

## **Susan**

I have tried  
to talk to you, through  
my paper and my pen,  
I want to reach  
your inner thoughts, but  
where do I begin?  
We've grown apart  
in spirit and in passion,  
heated words, hurled  
at each other, like  
so many stones, building

the wall we fashion.  
It's not like us  
to want to be destroying  
ourselves, in order to be free.

**As Friends**  
(by susan walmsley)

The waiting and indecision  
is worse than the fear of rejection,  
I suppose.  
I don't think you will  
reject me but rather  
draw me towards you  
in a long overdue embrace.

I thought you really cared,  
so I waited for you to tell me  
how you really felt. You never did.  
And the waiting and indecision  
is worse than the fear of rejection,  
I suppose.

At one time you kissed me,  
gently and sadly, turned and  
walked away. Another day  
I thought, another day.  
From the start, we could have been  
more than just friends.

I remembered the way you studied me,  
caressing my face and body  
with your eyes,  
acting out the parts of a play  
within your heart.

I wanted to tell you how I cared,  
but when it came time for you to leave,  
I noticed a strange sadness  
in your eyes.

So this is the way it will be?  
Never to see you again,  
all the joy and laughter shared,  
I thought you really cared?

And the waiting and indecision

is worse than the fear of rejection,  
I suppose.  
You make me angry with your silence.  
Why can't you  
come forward with  
your feelings, tell me,  
tell me anything?

Separated.  
There, I've said it.  
This one little word could  
make all the difference  
in the world, my world,  
your world, divorced  
within my heart.

Would that make any difference to you?  
The difference between running silent  
or running to me with your feelings.

I'm waiting for your response.  
We can be more than friends  
but the waiting and indecision  
is worse than the fear of rejection, I suppose.

## **Rejection**

Please leave  
and let me follow behind.  
We will never be friends.  
We will never be a part of  
each other. Sharing  
is not within you.

Do not come closer.  
We are no longer lovers,  
nor can we reconcile.

Please leave  
and let me follow behind.

## **The Virgin**

How can you be  
so opposed to  
the sexual satisfaction  
of a hooker  
when in all your virginity  
you have known little  
of the flame that  
can kindle in your heart  
and know nothing of  
the fire that can  
burn in your pants.

## **Seven Year Itch**

I tried to talk to you  
while you slept  
and as you mumbled in bed  
with your eyes closed,  
I listened.

We have been lonely  
you and I,  
going to bed each night  
but only to sleep,  
and now you say love songs  
in your restless slumber,  
reaching out to touch my face,  
calling someone else's name.

## **The Time Has Come to Pay the Piper**

The time has come to pay the piper  
said the lady to the loon,  
for such a melancholy melody,  
green backs for the tune,

The time has come to pay the piper  
said the trees to the land,  
none to soon came the reply,  
for the best of songs at hand.

I know of no other place to be  
to walk along beside the sea,  
lazy, hazy starlight upon grass,  
and hear of songs that last.

The time has come to pay the piper  
said the lady to the loon,  
for such a melancholy melody,  
a ten spot for the tune.

Up tree one bark, down to earth  
green upside leaves over brown,  
robin wings and spider mirth,  
no other way to come down.

The time has come to pay the piper  
said the lady with outstretched hand,  
for such a sad, sad melody,  
the time has come to pay the band.

The moon's upon the mountain tops,  
the lady has been delayed,  
she gave him all her love,  
and the piper has been payed.

## **Pandora's Box**

I slipped a note beneath your door,  
I heard it slip across the floor,  
and as I knelt I thought I heard  
a gentle cooing like a bird.

There was a sound I could only guess  
was the slow unzipping of your dress.  
I knew you were home, I'd seen the light,  
the little one that doesn't burn so bright.

I went to knock but to my surprise,  
I heard two different heavy sighs.  
I opened the door to my demise  
and saw a stranger between your thighs.

The note that slid across the floor,  
the one I slipped beneath your door,  
it was to have said that I'd been untrue,  
but now I know the jokes on you.

I thought I'd seen his face before,  
this morning behind the clinic door.  
Now, you may think that he's the best,  
but ask him who failed the VD test!

## **Your Heart**

The sun melted your heart  
like a brick of butter  
in my hands,  
flowing through my fingers,  
finding the floor.

My legs ran me fast  
to a cool place to harden it  
back again, but I  
could not save it all  
and what I could save,  
I will keep forever.

## **The Good Things in Life**

I too, appreciate  
and savour the sips  
of a natural tea.  
I can get close to the warmth  
of a suburban fire.  
I can feel the uncut lawn  
after virgin snow has gone.  
I too, appreciate  
the good things in life  
and dream of you all night long.

## **When it Comes Time for You to Leave me**

When it comes time  
for you to leave me,  
will you remember  
or will you forget me?

I sat beside the fire  
holding your hand in mine.  
I gazed into the flames,  
I saw you dreaming.

When you smiled  
and closed your eyes,  
I suddenly felt the fire  
that warmed your heart  
was not in the same room  
as the one that warmed mine.

When it comes time  
for you to leave me,  
will you remember  
or will you forget me?

## **When I Walked Into Your Life**

I walked into your life,  
I was walking like a blind man.  
I stepped into your life,  
I was not at all a sane man.

I stood on the corner of the street,  
I was saving tears for another day.  
I stood on the corner of the street,  
you came and showed me a better way.

I walked and talked beside you,  
I dropped the burden from my shoulders.  
I talked and walked beside you,  
you changed into pebbles those awesome boulders.

I pulled you close to me,  
you released me from my chains.  
I pulled you closer to me,  
I could see I was not insane.

I walked into your lifestyle,  
I was walking like a blind man.  
I stepped into your lifestyle,  
I could not see beyond my outstretched hand.

I realized you had shaped my future,  
and released me from my past.  
I hoped I could repay you in your future,  
and make these precious moments last.

## **Shadows, Reflections of Love**

Our shadows were holding hands  
for when we last walked together  
and sang love songs in the sand  
I knew you wanted to touch me.

Mostly for you  
not so much for me,  
when our distance grew  
I was a little hurt.

Much too easily  
we melted in each others arms  
it seemed somehow to me  
when we first met  
it seemed somehow to me  
we melted in each others arms  
much too easily.

I was a little hurt  
when our distance grew,  
not so much for me  
mostly for you.

I knew you wanted to touch me  
and sing love songs in the sand  
for when we last walked together  
our shadows were holding hands.

### **Is this All You've Got?**

It's getting cold out here.  
I'm a stranger at your door.  
I raise a weak fist, a knock,  
hard enough to hear.

It's getting lonely out here.  
I see a light upon the floor.  
I raise a weak fist, a knock,  
shadows move in fear.

I've walked a fair mile  
along the winding road.  
I raise a weak fist, open up!  
Feed my aching smile.

Is this all you've got?  
Bread through the mail slot!  
A morsel of chocolate!  
Is this all you've got?

You can trust this old man.  
Please don't throw me out.  
I'd rather have the whole loaf  
than eat the crumbs of doubt.

It's getting cold out here.  
I'm still at your door.  
Unlatch it. Open it wide.  
I want so much more.

### **I Was Thinking About You**

I was thinking about you,  
how you've grown  
since we first met.  
How you've changed  
since we first met.

I was thinking about you,  
how we've grown  
together,  
apart.

I was thinking about you.

When I dream,  
I dream about you.  
But when you dream..?

Maybe that's why  
I was thinking about you,  
of how you've changed  
since we first met,  
of how we've changed  
since we first met.

### **I Felt Your Embrace**

When we first met, I felt your warm skin  
without even touching you and through my poetry  
you read my life without even touching me.  
Then you chose a special verse,  
one segment of yourself to bestow upon me,  
a verbal yearning, a silent thank you,  
not realizing that in those words,  
I embraced your life having never even  
touched you.

## **A Song for You**

(by sylvia gerl now an ndp politician)

There's something inside me  
crying to be let out  
because I need you so badly,  
but doesn't get a chance.

Lions and giraffes  
behind bars in a foreign land,  
not speaking the same language,  
not being citizens,  
to work or go home  
or to get away.

I'm constantly travelling in circles  
and when I change directions

I'm facing a brick wall,  
an ocean of not knowing,  
having a commitment  
to those people who want  
to play their particular games  
and those humourless,  
nameless faces, that make my laws  
and restrict my longings.

That is, enough to keep me alive.

Maybe you can release me,  
or maybe you're one of those caged animals,  
are you game?

## **Suicide on Jarvis Street**

One summer night she walked alone  
across a street of cobblestone  
and with each step of echoed breath,  
she feared no evil, laughed at death.

Fair of face and soft of skin,  
pure of heart having never known sin,  
she chanced to meet a man disgraced,  
a slug unto the human race.

Feeling pity as she always does,  
felt sorry for him, just because,  
but through the booze and drugs of night,  
he saw her in a different light.

His mind went crazed,  
he swirled about as in a daze  
and struck her firmly 'round the head  
until he thought that she was dead.

Then he pulled her to his lair  
and tainted her soft virginal hairs  
and when she woke the night was cold,  
she felt so used and so old.  
Slowly she walked home to rest  
and ripped her heart from beneath her breast.



## Auschwitz (revisited)

originally published by  
Unfinished Monument Press 1985

## Auschwitz

My uncle went to Germany last year  
to find those poets and politicians  
who had shaped his childhood, but he  
could not find that lunatic fringe you see,  
for they smoked their last cigarette in 1943.

## The Ovens

I was there when  
they cleaned out the ovens,  
gut wrenching sweet stench  
with every shower of flames and  
I saw what intense heat does  
to fragile skin and bones,  
every shape, size, color and race,  
voice, habit and curve of face  
went not screaming into that place.  
Behind those iron oven doors,  
soot black sealed door  
with pyrex viewing windows  
not screaming they went but  
drugged or gassed or frozen.  
Any screams were long ago and far away.  
I'll never forget the frozen pregos  
popping open like so many apple pies  
when stuck with a fork.  
They don't last long in the intense  
unbearable heat, joining billowing  
blackened smoke going up,  
farther up that phallic stack  
airing transgressions in the name  
of medical science.  
I thank their Gods and my God  
that they had reclined in the arms of Morpheus  
long before they were scraped from  
the cinder pit for I was there when  
they cleaned out the ovens.

## **Prisoner of War**

We were unable to help you  
flesh torn barbed wire  
scraping red your bare skin  
like a lover's fingernails digging in  
drawing you closer to her.  
I, we, saw you running, muscles pumping.  
Your heart filled our eyes with tears  
both for your last burst to freedom and for fear.  
Fear of dog tracks in your footsteps  
as they clamped your throat and drank  
your breath into their hot lungs.  
Ripped bone white you hung  
in your new found freedom  
and as the guards pulled you  
from your steel sanctuary,  
two blood stained barbs caught your cheeks  
and pulled a smile across your face.

## **Prisoner of War**

### **Part Two**

All the things that I do to survive  
and all the words of hope that I hear  
are in desperation. The bridge  
of my life is on the horizon  
and I can see the broken railings now.  
Only a fool sees past them  
to the other side and I am pacing  
my own footsteps to the edge,  
pick up my wings and fly away.

## Your Fathers Pain

How can you feel your father's pain?  
Why do you carry his hate  
upon your shoulders?  
Second and third generation hate.  
You make it sound like your ancestors  
were the only people killed in the war.  
Let him fight his own fight,  
dream his own dreams and let him  
hate his own hates.  
You can only help him by letting go,  
instead you reinforce his ideas  
and his ideals on people  
who weren't even born then!  
Do you want to be married to his memories?  
It may hurt to divorce your feelings  
from his fears before marrying into  
this modern world and as everyone knows,  
you can't dance at two weddings  
at the same time and then  
be expected to spend the honeymoon  
in only one pair of arms.

## **Eleven Million Human Beings**

When you opened the restaurant door  
and entered the almost empty room,  
I could feel the winds of war,  
a death draft, doom.  
Your life has been the pits,  
leading us all to believe it was  
only the Jews who died at Auschwitz.  
Do your history books not include:  
those passing into senility or  
those of mental tranquillity or  
ordinary Poles or Negroes or Commies too,  
Ukrainians or Slavs or political dissidents or  
non Aryan aliens and gays or  
does your book only list Jews?  
Six million went up in smoke!  
You think the other five million were a joke?  
It was my father's army that liberated Auschwitz  
but do I flaunt his medals  
upon my chest in front of you?  
Don't dump your holocaust on my plate,  
there really is no one left alive  
for you to hate.

## (In)sanity

there is a fierce underlying  
force in all of us that  
is sitting on that fine line  
drawn on the wall  
in Freud's outer office,  
a line so fine as it crosses the ceiling  
and passes down the center of  
the French doors to his inner world,  
that one of these doors at a time  
need only be opened by the gentle  
shifting of weight no matter how fast  
and furious we want to get in  
after the door has been opened

Appeared as a song on *From The Outside* CD,  
Curtis Brunet 2001

## **On the Discovery of Josef Mengel Ad2000**

Good God!  
They're not dead yet?  
The geriatric Jews hunting  
those crusty old Nazis  
who are too old to strike the match  
that started all this  
hatred in the first place!

They must all be well  
over one hundred years old,  
but don't believe everything  
you hear as their  
one hundred years of solitude,  
of hiding, of tracking, of killing  
will never end for  
their children will follow  
their children and so on and so on and ...  
soon, no one will be alive  
to stand up for the Afghans  
and the Cambodians and the  
South Americans and the South Africans  
and on and on and on ...  
because no one cares  
for the Third World nigger  
and the back woods,  
slant eyed gooks or the  
child born and raised on the streets  
of Calcutta, the City of Joy.

*Well* (Halifax) Dec. 1989  
Translated and published in Hindi, *Kavyam*, Calcutta 2003

## Vietnam War Memorial

Tonight I found something  
I thought I had lost;  
along the Black Wall  
my fingers felt the souls of time,  
passed over strangers, old friends,  
fifteen years of unnecessary bloodshed,  
checked through forty or fifty names  
in the Book of The Black Wall,  
holding back the tears, lest  
I should find one name I knew  
having known them before adolescence.  
I could not visualize them maimed  
or missing in action or dead.  
I could not see them clothed in khaki,  
gun in hand, forgetting  
the one thing they and I had lost,  
our childhood.

*Crossing Lines: Poets who came to Canada in the  
Vietnam War Era* Seraphim Editions, Toronto, Ontario 2008

**1989  
for the Colonel**

1989

was not a good year for war vets.  
Few made it past Christmas,  
some slipped through the New Year.  
All of them slipped through our memories.

1989

was not a good year to die,  
because:  
you can't say I love you  
when you're gone,  
you can't share the good times  
when you're gone,  
you can't clean your gun  
when you're gone,  
you can't play with your grandchildren  
when you're gone,  
you can't change your will  
when you're gone,  
you can't smile  
when you're gone,  
you can't tell war stories  
when you're gone,  
you can't hug me  
when you're gone,  
you can't say I Love You  
you just.....can't..

## **George!**

What is it you saw or didn't see  
when you walked into that country,  
blinded by glory  
the ins and outs  
lights and oil  
sand and stone  
burkha and bazooka,  
muscles on those uniformed boys?

What is it you saw or didn't see  
before dropping terror on that innocent country,  
sitting in a tavern on that Friday night,  
if you can remember the tavern  
or the night for that matter,  
planning every one else's life.  
It was the night before giving the orders:  
GO TO WAR! KEEP THE PEACE!

You thought you were protecting  
the world from terrorists,  
forcing your democracy on  
Allah Akbar,  
inflaming the Arab fatwah  
captured on Al Gazirah.

George!!  
Believe me when I say  
you won't be remembered for your vision  
as Commander in Chief  
of the US Military and Coalition of the Willing.

You think you are every man  
and all men, except the French  
whom you now despise,  
so I guess you will never come  
across Voltaire who wrote about you  
200 years ago when He said:

“Everyman is guilty of the good  
he did not do”

[Edmonton May 2004]

## **Letter Home from a Body Bag**

This is my last letter home,  
just enough time to say goodbye  
to dad and mom, all my friends,  
roses in the hedge,  
the street corner poet selling words,  
the street corner church selling words,  
the street walker selling words.

This is to be my last letter home,  
to Tom, Dick, Sally, Fred, Spot and Sue.  
If I could only be there to see the looks  
on their faces but I'm going to war  
and they wouldn't recognize me  
or my street corner face.  
My camouflaged face.

This should be my last letter home,  
where in my old bedroom sat my trunk  
filled with old letters, old dreams,  
uniform and ammo case, journals.  
No one will read them because I never  
sparked a magic fire in their hearts  
strong enough to melt the stones and ice  
in their illiterate minds

Is this my last letter home,  
where, when I was there,  
the light was on,  
  
the day I ran away to join the war.  
Reach out and read me.  
Read my books, plays, poetry,  
never more those false smiles when I call.

This is to be my last letter home,  
one copy to you, one to her and  
one to each friend who greeted me first,  
smiled, saved a life, shared my feelings for peace.  
Anyone who is better now  
than when they started,  
one to the clubs I belong to  
and the ones I wanted to,  
and maybe one to some of your friends.

This should be my last letter home,  
to ask for love, world of freedom.  
Can you say luck?  
No, to you a soldier is a distant thing,  
to me it's duty at all cost, people,  
death, dogs, acid rain, diamonds in the rough.

Is this my last letter home?  
You're damn right it is and you know it!  
I've been hiding my feelings on paper,  
writing between the lines of all my  
poems, stories, plays, trying to reach only you.  
Wanting you to say, I understand...  
I know I understand you... really I do.

YOU'LL COME TO MY GRAVE STONE  
WHERE I WILL FOREVER BE ALONE  
HOLDING THIS LETTER  
 BROUGHT FROM HOME  
STILL THINKING IT'S ONLY  
ANOTHER POEM

Wayne (Scott) Ray was born in Alabama and spent most of his first fifteen years with his family on Ernest Harmon Air Force Base in Stephenville, Newfoundland until moving to Woodstock, Ontario in 1965. He became a Canadian Citizen in 1978. He lived in Toronto with his wife and two daughters from 1973-1988 when they moved to London, Ontario in July of

1988. Wayne is the founder of HMS Press publishing, the Multicultural Poetry Reading Series (University of Toronto), Scarborough Arts Council Poetry Contest, co-founder of the Canadian Poetry Association (CPA) (1985-88 Toronto & 1992-1995 London) and co-chairman of the League of Canadian Poets: Associates (Toronto) for 1985/86. He was co-director of the Beaches Poetry Workshop in 1983 and was the recipient of the Editors Prize for 'Best Poet Published in 1989' from Canadian Author and Bookman. Through his work with the CPA as National Coordinator, it was his suggestion that established the poetry section of The Literary Review of Canada in 1993. He was instrumental in helping establish the London Arts Council and was the President of the New London Arts Festival in 1999. He is listed in Who's Who in Ontario. Wayne has several books of poetry and non-fiction published as well as credits in; anthologies, periodicals, journals and newspapers across Canada between 1983 and 2014.

